

I am a Special Education teacher in the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Program in the Northampton Public School District. For several years, I have known Gaby as the technology expert, and have attended several valuable trainings with her on PD days; but this year I have come to know Gaby as much more. She is a valuable team member, and a strong support to us in our program.

Our program is currently comprised of students from Pre-K through grade 5, who range from one end of the spectrum to the other: from nonverbal autistic students, to students with severe behavioral issues, to high functioning students who are able to be mainstreamed in the general education classroom for most of their school day. Each student has a behavior plan and an individualized schedule. Many of our students require a one-to-one aide. This fall when we began school, our student population had doubled in size, while our staffing had not. We needed to creatively think about how to overhaul the program, without compromising any of the support the students need.

Gaby has been invaluable to us as we have worked to meet student needs and maintain a strong ASD program. While we have a standing monthly consult meeting, Gaby also consistently reaches out to ask how she can better support our needs in the classroom. She often anticipates our needs, and even if I haven't known what question to ask, she has shown me technology that supports my students in ways I would not have known about. Gaby has ensured that each of my students has access to technology that targets their needs-- from academic to social skills to self regulation.

Her support even goes beyond technology consult: one day this fall, when she entered my classroom to check in with me, I was struggling to support two students who both needed one-on-one attention simultaneously. Gaby came right in and calmly began to work with one of the students. Her willingness to jump right in and help averted a huge blowout.

In getting to know Gaby better, I have come to learn that not only does she have a vast knowledge of how we as teachers can use technology to best support our students, she is also accessible to us and willing to jump in and lend any hand that we may need.

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